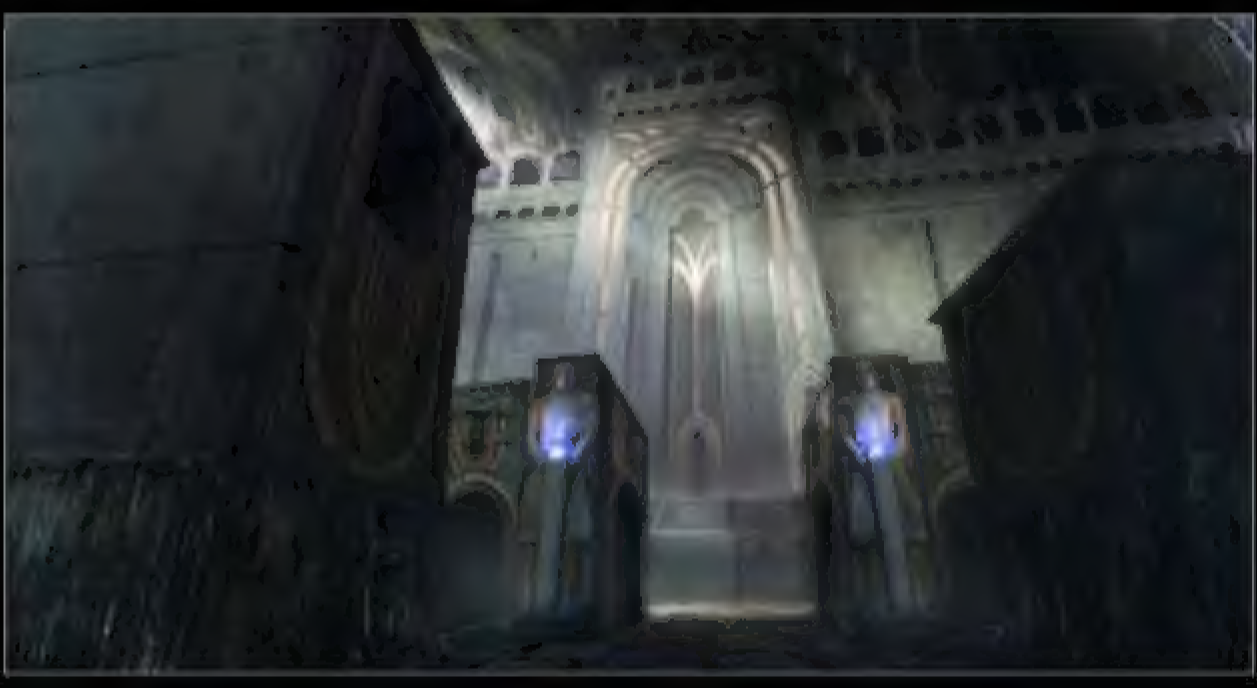
The Fall of the Razielim – part 1

2013-12-02 GEORGE KELION, SQUARE ENIX

Kain's rise to power was brutal and absolute. A mere century after bestowing his six Lieutenants with the dark gift of Vampiric un-life, Humanity had been thoroughly subjugated and a new Vampire civilisation came to reign over the land of Nosgoth.

The six Lieutenants themselves were essential to Kain's ascension, their instruments of power being the Clans they each raised to form Kain's Vampire legions. Needing a place to rear fledglings in safety, the Clans constructed underground compounds. Here newly sired soldiers could mature, away from the deadly effects of sunlight. One by one, Nosgoth's major Human kingdoms fell – mortal soldiers slain in battle were dragged to these dark places beneath the ground, only to awaken with inhuman purpose, hungry for the blood of their former comrades.

As Nosgoth's hinterlands also began to fall under Kain's rule, these complexes expanded to become fortified subterranean cities. Prior to the construction of the smokestacks that would come to blot out the sun from the sky, these cities were used to house armouries, gladiator pits and hunting mazes, as well as storehouses full of plunder. Thousands of Human slaves laboured and died to build each cavernous metropolis.



As the fledglings matured, their bodies would undergo metamorphosis. Once turned, their previously Human-looking bodies would change form and develop certain characteristics of the Ancients, the mysterious forebears of Vampire-kind. Fangs would replace eyeteeth, ears would acquire a distinctive peak and eyes would change colour. By the point they had reached the status of Clan Elder, a Vampire would sport cloven claws and hooves where once they had Human hands and feet. Living side-by-side, a Clan's younger, less altered Vampires would often make up the legions' lower ranks, while those further along their path of physical evolution took on more trusted positions, providing council to their Lieutenant-patriarch and ensuring the proper execution of his orders.

It was Kain and his Lieutenants, however, who would display the most marked transformations. Periodically, Kain would enter a state of pupation and emerge more powerful than before. His Lieutenants would follow a decade or so later with each receiving ever more individual dark gifts, facets of which would in turn go on to be exhibited by their Clan. Before each state of change, a Vampire would need to gorge on vast quantities of Human blood to sustain them while they underwent their transmutation. Eventually emerging ravenous and disorientated, Vampiric 'midwives' would be on hand to supply even greater amounts of fresh blood while they came to their senses.

Kain, now the sole progenitor of the Vampire race, would experience this progress before all others, his enormous power remaining unchallenged. Until, that is, his first-raised Lieutenant – Raziel – was gifted with wings. The most talented and obedient of all the Lieutenants, Raziel was unmatched in beauty but also in vanity and as Kain's most favoured son, was respected and loathed by his brothers in equal measure. When word first reached the Razielim that their Lieutenant-patriarch had the audacity to evolve ahead of his god-like master, grave concerns fermented amongst the Clan's elders. Some took it as an act of blasphemy, others as a blessing. While a schism threatened to divide those who sided more with their Lieutenant-patriarch than their Emperor, all were united in their concerns over how – or even if – Raziel should present this development to Kain.

Raziel, either oblivious or unconcerned by his progeny's fears, marched to the Sanctuary of the Clans to present his new assets. For what everyone assumed to be his impertinence, Kain struck Raziel down. His punishment was to be cast into The Lake of the Dead, Kain's execution ground for traitors and weaklings.

Shocked and bewildered by Raziel's apparent execution, the elders of Clan Razielim recognised that they too were now under threat. Taking precautions to secure their future, they began to move those Razielim already pupating in their state of change to a secret vault deep within an underground city beneath the mountains to the east of Coorhagen. They would be safe there, for now.

Kain's disappearance, however, was to change everything.

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The Fall of the Razielim – part 2

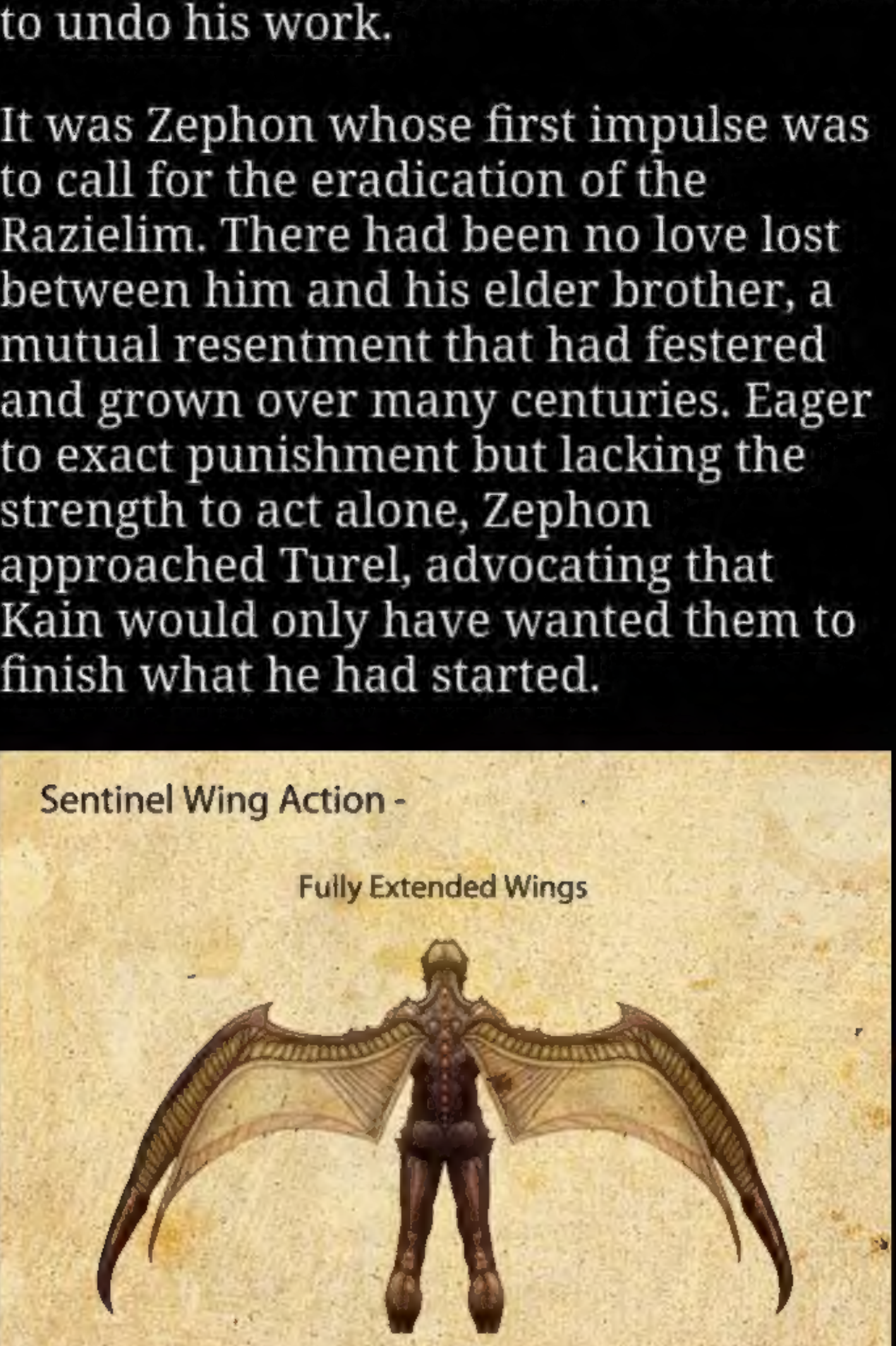
Tagged In: STORY

PUBLISHED ON: 2013-12-05
AUTHOR: George Kelion, Square Enix

Kain's vice-like grip over Nosgoth was undeniable, the various Vampire factions within the Empire held together by his iron will. Yet rule over an irredeemably corrupted land destined to deteriorate even further held no interest for one who had been elevated to godhood. Executing Raziel had merely been Kain's first move in his attempt to re-write the history so carefully laid out for him by fate. Understanding that the keys to deliverance from this ignoble destiny ultimately lay in Nosgoth's distant past, Kain vanished into the time-stream, leaving his domain in the hands of the five remaining Lieutenants.

The motivations for Kain's disappearance were as misconstrued by his Lieutenants as his reasons for casting their brother into the Abyss. But theirs was not to question their master's intentions, theirs was to ensure Kain's will be done. They took Raziel's latest evolution to be an act of blasphemy in the eyes of their Emperor; one they assumed threatened to undo his work.

It was Zephon whose first impulse was to call for the eradication of the Razielim. There had been no love lost between him and his elder brother, a mutual resentment that had festered and grown over many centuries. Eager to exact punishment but lacking the strength to act alone, Zephon approached Turel, advocating that Kain would only have wanted them to finish what he had started.

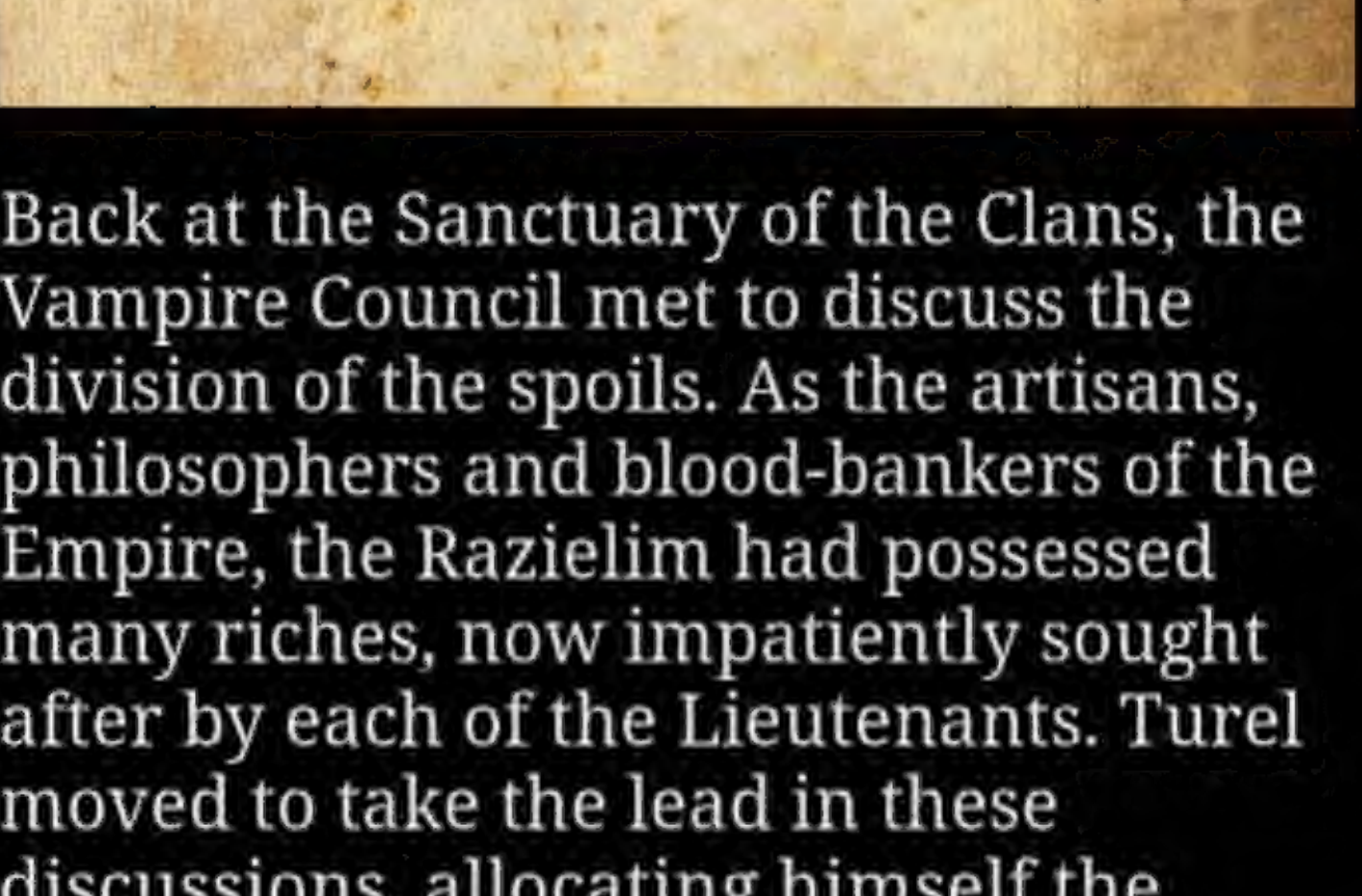


Calling a meeting of the Vampire Council, Turel set forth the plan to exterminate the Razielim, believing not just that it was his noble duty, but also his right to determine as first in line to the throne. Dumah agreed to lead the assault, eager to demonstrate his might before a legion now missing its figurehead and fully aware of the position of power this would put him in when they came to divide Clan Razielim's territory. Melchiah needed little convincing, having long harboured jealousy over his elder brother's beauty in the face of his own degeneration. Rahab, who venerated Kain perhaps even more highly than his brothers, was the most uncomfortable about this proposed act of genocide, yet fell in line after being convinced they were merely fulfilling Kain's wishes.

First, Razielim ambassadors to the other Clans were rounded up and executed, with any Razielim stationed outside their home territory the next to perish. Some Razielim had been tasked with delivering the much needed care and sustenance to their pupating Clan-mates, who - in their defenceless state - had been locked away in a secret vault under the mountains for their own protection. They were ambushed and slaughtered before they had made it further north than Vasserbünde, the last to die refusing to give up the secret, even in death maintaining that their supplies had been intended for Coorhagen.

The attack on Clan Razielim's home territory was similarly sudden and devastating. Their first line of defence could not withstand the collective force of the other five Clans. The combined legions made short work of the fledglings, outnumbering and overpowering their former allies. Adult Razielim, too, proved to be no match, their bodies burned so as to ensure there would be no return from the afterlife. Much to the surprise of the troops, the Clan's elders had already developed wings of their own and fled with great haste in the direction of the underground city in which their sole remaining Clan-mates were interred. However, this was an action already anticipated by the Lieutenants, who had instructed the lookout posts positioned within the heartlands to report and destroy any winged Vampire they spotted.

Followed too swiftly by the combined legions to escape unnoticed and terrified of giving away the position of their remnant brethren, the elders of Clan Razielim carried on to Dark Eden, seeking refuge among the upper mountain peaks of their old hunting grounds. But this was familiar territory to their numerous pursuers – separated and frightened, those elders not hunted down by other Vampires were picked off by Dark Eden's resident Humans before they could escape. In a matter of days, the sightings of winged Vampires had ceased altogether.



Back at the Sanctuary of the Clans, the Vampire Council met to discuss the division of the spoils. As the artisans, philosophers and blood-bankers of the Empire, the Razielim had possessed many riches, now impatiently sought after by each of the Lieutenants. Turel moved to take the lead in these discussions, allocating himself the greatest share and postulating that it was his right to do so as Kain's heir. Dumah countered that they were all Kain's heirs and that while they all had equal standing on the Council, he alone commanded the greatest number of soldiers still stationed within Clan Razielim's former home territory. While Turel paused to consider his response to this threat, Zephon put forward that the originator of this most successful of plans ought to be afforded the right to have first pickings. Melchiah jumped in quickly, arguing that assets ought to be divided by need, with the greatest portion being set aside for those that required them the most. Only Rahab pleaded for restraint, his requests falling on deaf ears.

Dumah lunged at Turel, only to be fought off and restrained by his brothers. No one yet knew that the first blow had been struck in a dispute that would come to last centuries. The intrigues that had once provided amusement for Kain's court now erupted into open warfare – a weakness that Humanity would come to exploit.

Meanwhile, beneath the mountains to the east of Coorhagen, locked in the darkness of a secret vault hidden in an underground city, the lost Razielim began to awaken.

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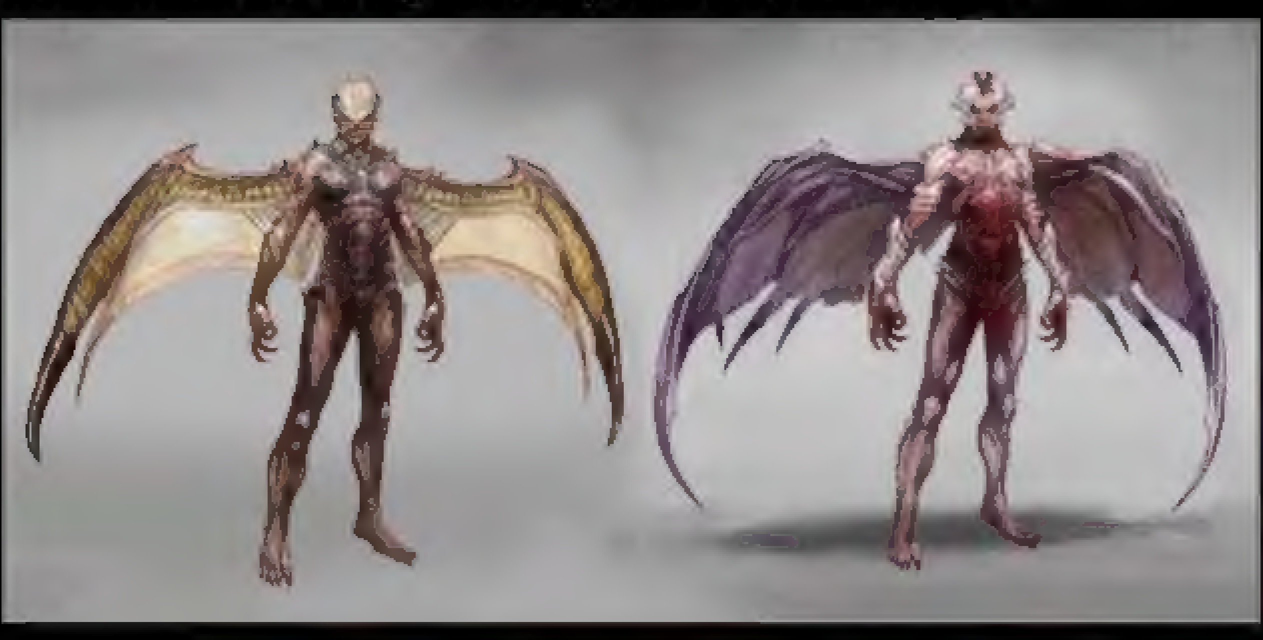
The Fall of the Razielim – part 3

2013-12-09 GEORGE KELION, SQUARE ENIX

Vampiric evolution is beyond anything any mortal could endure. Through force of will, Kain alone had been able to influence the nature and direction of this gift, a skill not shared by his progeny. The process can take days, or it can last years – the greater the advancement, the longer the time spent in gestation and the stronger the blood-thirst upon revival.

When the last of the Razielim, lost for years inside the Vampire underground city, completed their metamorphosis, they awoke to strange surroundings and a deep, voracious thirst. This was not the familiar Clan territory in which they had entered their quiescent state, nor were there blood-bringers ready to provide them with the sustenance they so desperately needed. Numbering in the mere hundreds, the forgotten Razielim had no way of knowing that they now represented the remains of their once proud Clan.

Overwhelmed by their primal urges, the Razielim's sole thought was to feed. However the means of their salvation from the purge on their Clan now proved to be their undoing - the hidden vault in which they had been interred could only be opened with keys belonging to their now dead Clan elders. Trapped inside and deprived of the fresh blood they sorely needed, their latest physical development – the gift of flight – could not save them from their confinement nor bring them any closer to nourishment.

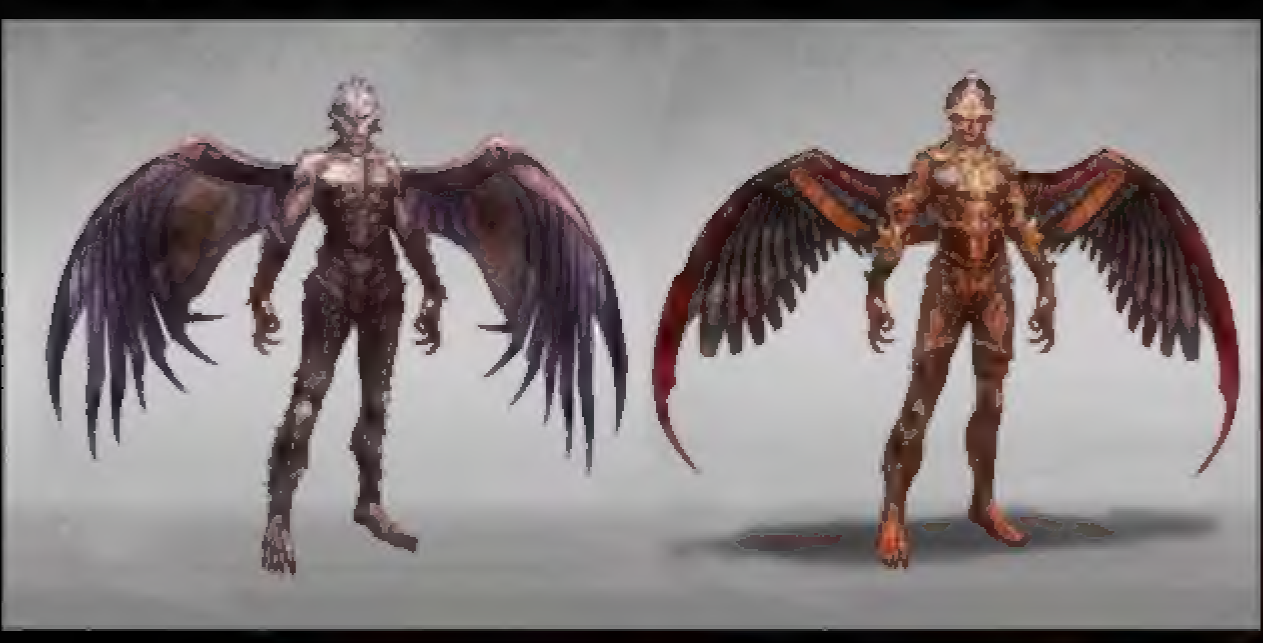


Away from the eyes of the world, the Razielim festered in the darkness for decades. Starved of blood and sapped of life, the beautiful forms with which they had emerged from their pupation began to warp and degenerate. Once fair skin became hardened and chitinous, digits became disjoined and bone came to protrude from their new wings, lending them an appearance more demonic than Vampiric. Fearful that their mental faculties would deteriorate along with their physical form, the Razielim were left with but one recourse – they would have to claw their way out.

Slowly, resolutely, inch by painful inch, the Razielim scratched through the heavy door to the underground city beyond, their bodies growing more hideous along with their need for blood. Such was the thirst driving them that when one among their number faltered and gave in, his brethren collectively eviscerated him, eager to suck out whatever passed for blood lying in his veins. However nothing edible was to be found within, so the Razielim sharpened his bones for use as tools. No others attempted to break rank; all were focused on the task at hand.

Time passed sluggishly there in the dark, but for an immortal time is the one resource that can always be relied on in abundance. Eventually, the last of the Razielim emerged into the gloom of the Vampire underground city. Lost, desperate and ravenously hungry, the ravages the Razielim had suffered in isolation left them in no condition to fly far, much less do battle. Nearing their wits' end and consumed by the need to feed, the decision was made to send out a reconnaissance party to determine their whereabouts and plot a course home.

This group was led by one Razielim known as Eskandor, a high minded individual who had been looking forward to the benefits of joining the ranks of his Clan's elders, now humbled and sullied by the cruel hand dealt to him by fate. Leading his small group of followers out into the open air for the first time in decades, they flew away from their mountain prison. Drawn by the scent of Human blood, they slowly, falteringly approached a large settlement overlooked by a giant statue of Kain himself, immediately recognising it to be Coorhagen.



What the Razielim scouts did not recognise, however, was the condition in which they found it. The town was deserted, its blood farms and breeding pens stood empty and unguarded. Swooping down to investigate further, they came across small numbers of decapitated Dumahim and Melchahim – their heads on pikes and arrow-riddled bodies burned to a cinder. Upon closer inspection, it became clear that whatever had occurred here must have happened recently, as vital juices still oozed from the severed necks of their former brothers-in-arms.

Bewildered, bereft of nourishment and with strength failing, Eskandor led his small band back to the underground city. Now, with a familiar location from which they could navigate, they unanimously agreed to journey south to their Clan home territory – surely there they would find answers and slake their thirst.

Under cover of darkness, lest whatever befell Coorhagen spell doom for them as well, the Razielim made their way towards their Clan territory and the promise of a safe haven. As they journeyed over Nosgoth, more gliding than flying so as to preserve energy, they spotted fires littering the landscape where lookout posts had once stood – clearly all was not well in Kain's court. Just as their strength was about to finally give out, the Razielim finally reached their ancestral home, falling unceremoniously from the sky into the central courtyard.

Climbing to their feet, the Razielim were surprised to find themselves surrounded not by the familiar faces of their kindred, but rather scores of Dumahim Reavers and, towering over them, none other than Dumah himself.

Fate, it seemed, had one last hand to play against the children of Raziel.

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The Fall of the Razielim – part 4

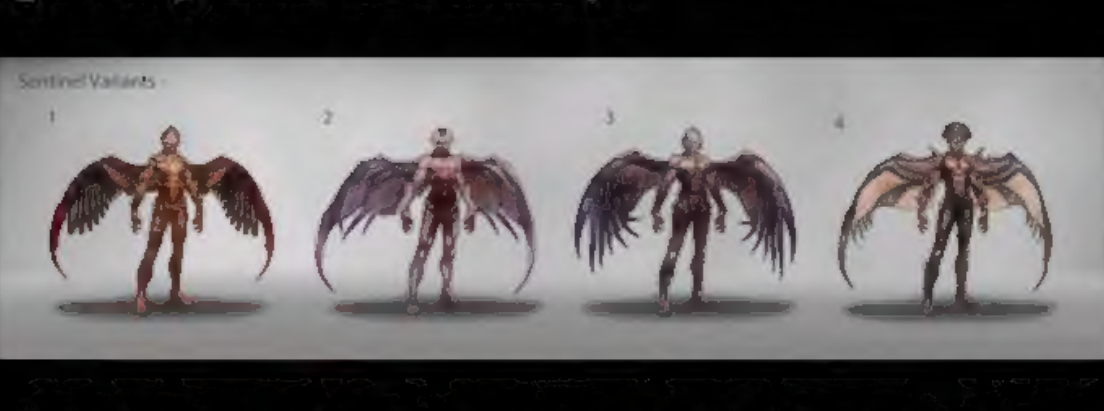
Tagged in: STORY

PUBLISHED ON: 2013-12-17
AUTHOR: George Kelion, Square Enix

The territory of Clan Razielim now received the last members of its all but extinct native faction. Yet Dumah, patriarch of the Dumahim, could not quite determine exactly what manner of creature stood before him – they smelled of Vampire and possessed wings like the annihilated Razielim Clan elders, yet the rest of their form was so abhorrent that surely they could not have been sired by his apostate eldest brother.

Even in their sorely weakened state, the Razielim observed proper protocol - such was the impact of a millennium in servitude to Kain's empire. Before Dumah could issue an order, Eskandor composed himself, kneeled before Dumah and swiftly divulged all they had witnessed in Coorhagen – the decapitated Vampires, the burned bodies and the empty cages lacking Human cattle.

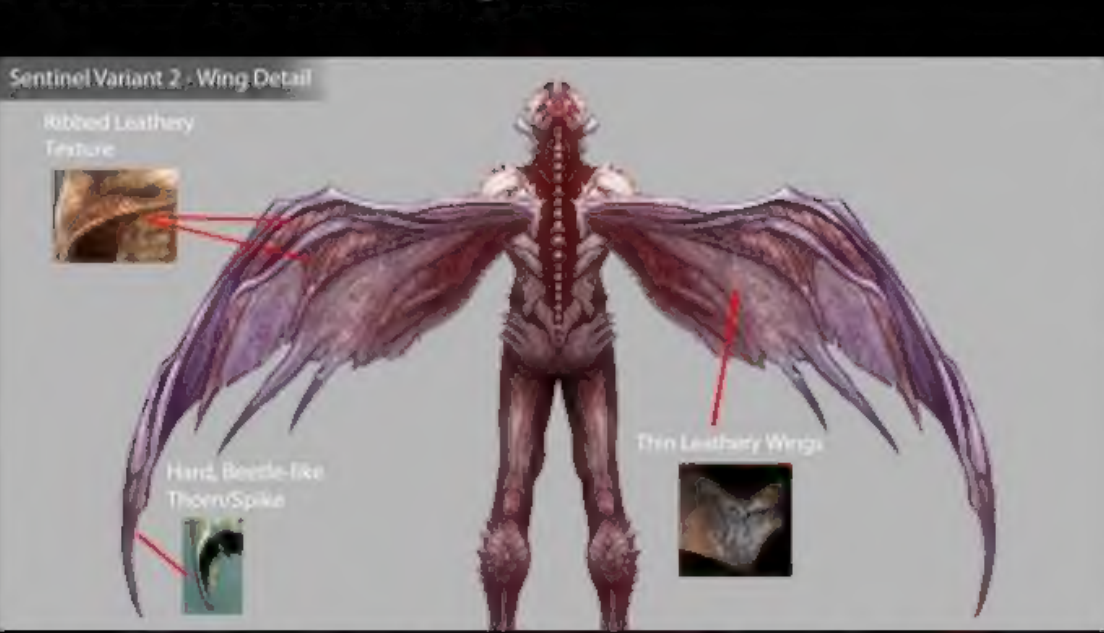
Dumah stayed his hand. He had harboured suspicions when Reavers stationed in Willendorf had failed to dispatch their regular missives, but now they were confirmed - this must be the work of Humans. In that moment, Dumah understood that the Vampires' civil war had proved to be the distraction the troublesome Humans had needed to stage an uprising – one that must be quelled quickly and ruthlessly.



Eskandor, still ignorant that he and his Clan-mates were surrounded by hostile forces, continued his account. He explained how the lost Razielim had awoken from their state of change only to find themselves interred and forced to slowly claw their way to freedom. With no trace of their Clan and their home territory in the hands of outsiders, Eskandor pleaded with his assumed allies for the fresh blood they so desperately needed, lest they succumb to the madness scratching at the edges of their psyches.

Dumah's face betrayed nothing of the thoughts and questions teeming in his mind. Were these really the last remnant of the most beautiful and favoured of all the Clans? Truly, Raziel's pride had come before the Razielim's fall. What should he make of these wretched beings in front of him? Clearly their wings would provide the Clans with a unique advantage against the Human rabble by means of death from above. If only they weren't an abomination in the eyes of Kain... but hadn't Kain's chief pursuit been the subjugation of Humankind? Perhaps, if they could be brought to heel, there would be room for them yet amongst the legions. Moreover, they could doubtless be disposed of once they no longer proved useful or biddable.

With a gesture, Dumah ordered his troops to stand down. Beckoning for one of his aides, Dumah gave instructions for the Razielim to be kept under close guard and for Eskandor to be brought to his personal quarters. Upon his arrival, Eskandor was offered a meagre supply of blood rations. There, before his captor, Eskandor at last slaked his thirst, noisily and messily revelling in his Vampiric appetites. But Dumah knew he was far from having had his fill – this had been merely a taste, Eskandor's loyalty would have to be tested before he and the Razielim could be allowed to return to their full strength.

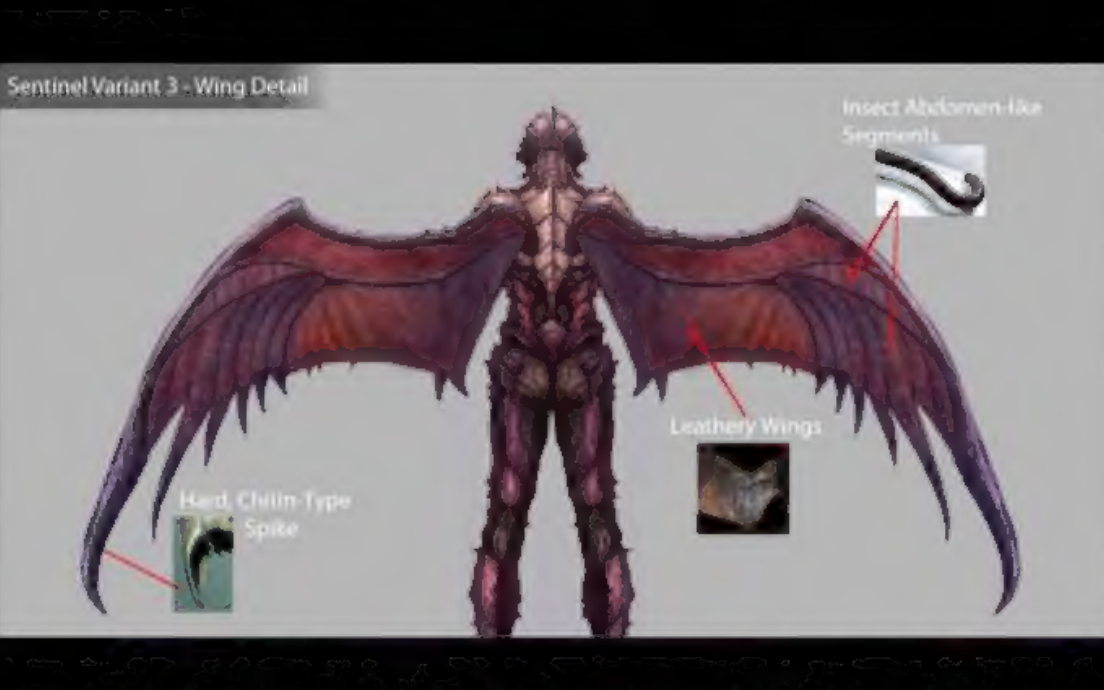

Sentinel Variant 2 - Wing Detail
Ribbed Leathery Texture
Thin Leathery Wings
Hard, Beetle-like Thorn/Spike

As he recovered his senses, Eskandor asked Dumah what had transpired in the years he and his Clan-mates had spent in captivity. At once, Dumah's personal guard raised their hackles and bared their teeth – for the first time, Eskandor realised that he and his Clan-mates' lives were in peril. Dumah recognised the fear in Eskandor's eyes – the Razielim were in no fit state to flee and well they knew it.

Ordering his guardsmen to leave them in private, Dumah proceeded to reveal this hitherto untold history. How Raziel had betrayed their lord and master, Kain, by daring to evolve beyond him. That this act of blasphemy had been an affront tantamount to rebellion in the eyes of the Vampire Council and how, in their Emperor's absence, they had been compelled to complete his holy work. Raziel had been a traitor, aided and abetted by the members of his Clan, and the Council could not risk their civilisation on this upstart inheritance. The purge had been the will of Kain himself and who was Eskandor to question the will of his god? The last of the Razielim, he explained, should count themselves lucky to be alive; their scant numbers could not possibly withstand the combined threat of both the Vampire legions and the Human armies presumably mustering as he spoke, especially not in their weakened condition.

To Dumah's mind, all of this was true. He felt no qualms about neglecting to mention that it had been he and his brother Turel who had personally cast Raziel into the Lake of The Dead. So too, he described the civil war that had engulfed Clans as nothing but lawlessness that had occurred in the wake of Kain's absence. None but the Lieutenants had witnessed Raziel's execution or the meetings of the Vampire Council, so none could say otherwise. He impressed upon Eskandor how the danger now posed by Humanity was the present threat, one that must command the sole focus of Vampire-kind.

Dumah understood the value of honour; loyalty was the impetus that bound each Clan together. An order from him – even under pain of death – would not be as well-founded as if it had originated within the Razielim themselves. Goading Eskandor, Dumah asked him what exactly the Razielim could offer to save their wretched hides.


Sentinel Variant 3 - Wing Detail
Insect Abdomen-like Segments
Leathery Wings
Hard Chitin-Type Spike

Aware that his Clan-mates were at the point of madness, Eskandor swore fealty in exchange for sustenance and safety. Dumah demanded he prove his trustworthiness and ordered Eskandor to gather intelligence on the Human armies, with the rest of his Clan kept hostage and hungry until he came back. Before the day was out, Eskandor had returned with word of Human forces assembling in the infamous mountain settlement of Valeholm.

Dumah was troubled. He sent word to Turel and relayed Eskandor's findings – if such events had overcome Coorhagen and Valeholm, as inconceivable as they were, then what had befallen the hinterlands and beyond? Turel called a meeting of the Vampire Council, the first in centuries, stressing the gravity of the situation they collectively faced. While the younger Lieutenants were loath to entertain such an invitation, Turel was able to appeal to their sense of duty – in spite of everything, Kain would never have countenanced open conflict between the Clans while Humanity stood to make a mockery of all he had accomplished as Emperor.

At the Sanctuary of the Clans, Zephon pushed for the instant assassination of these wretched excuses for Vampires, but could not deny their value as specialist troops. Melchiah suggested their numbers be thinned even further, but the scarcity of viable warrior Razielim could not allow the Lieutenants such a luxury... at least for the time being. Rahab suggested the Razielim attack the Humans' Citadel, unassailable as it was to ground forces, but Turel was unwilling to send such untested troops on so precarious a mission. After all, they could rely on the Humans, scattered as they were with their short lives and feeble frames, to be ill prepared for an aerial assault when the time did come.

A truce was immediately called. The Clans would unite and move against Freeport, securing Western Nosgoth and cutting the Humans off from any supplies reaching them from beyond the Great Southern Sea. They did not expect what a crucial role the Razielim would come to play in this mission.

So it was the lost Razielim rejoined the ranks of the Vampire legions, with Eskandor as their sergeant, who made it clear to his Clan they now owed their lives to the clemency of Dumah and Turel. Dependent on their mercy for any blood not won in battle, the Razielim soon grew loyal to the Lieutenants, despite scurrilous murmurs of reprisals once the war was won.

The Razielim's vanity had not deserted them as they battled side-by-side with their once hostile brethren, so they covered their now hideous faces with a variety of fearsome masks to frighten the pathetic Humans even further. The Razielim came to relish their place on the battlefield – over time, those who fared better in the slaughter would regenerate certain aspects of their once beautiful physical appearance as they drained extra Humans of their life's blood.

Now, with Humanity's resurgence having united the Vampires of Nosgoth once again, the Razielim must prove their place amongst the Clans while waging war against their common enemy.

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